

### REMARKS

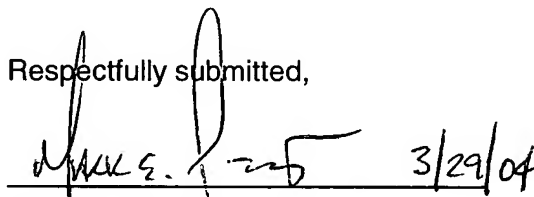
Claims 11-27 have been added. Original Claims 1-10 remain unchanged in this reissue application. Claims 1-27 now remain pending in this application. A statement under 37 C.F.R. 1.173(c) is provided below. In view of the above, Applicants submit that pending Claims 1-27 are now in condition for allowance. Allowance of Claims 1-27 at an early date is solicited.

Corresponding action is respectfully solicited.

PTO is authorized to charge any additional fees incurred as a result of the filing hereof or credit any overpayment to our account #02-0900.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned should any questions arise.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Mark E. Tetreault, Esq. and the date 3/29/04.

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**STATEMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.173(c)**  
**Status of Claims and Support of Claims**

Claims 1-10 are pending and unchanged from the original patent and remain in the reissue application.

New Claim 11 after further consideration and investigation, Applicant has discovered that the scope of original independent claim 1 was overly narrow in view of the state of the art at the time the application was filed. Applicant submits this claim to capture subject matter that lies within the scope of the disclosure that was not originally captured in the claims of the patent as issued. Specifically, Applicant has amended the language to eliminate excess language and non-functional elements from the claim to more clearly identify the invention. Further the top handguard and bottom handguard have been revised to a single fixed handguard assembly.

New Claim 12 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 11 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 13 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 11 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 14 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 11 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 15 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 11 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 16 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 15 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 17 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 16 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 18 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 15 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 19 after further consideration and investigation, Applicant has discovered that the scope of original independent claim 1 was overly narrow in view of the state of the art at the time the application was filed. Applicant submits this claim to capture subject matter that lies within the scope of the disclosure that was not originally captured in the claims of the patent as issued. Specifically, Applicant has amended the language to eliminate excess language and non-functional elements from the claim to more clearly identify the invention. Further the top handguard and bottom handguard have been revised to a single fixed handguard assembly.

New Claim 20 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 19 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 21 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 19 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 22 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 19 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 23 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 19 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 24 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 19 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 25 is a new dependent claim depending from new Claim 19 and includes limitations originally found in Claim 1.

New Claim 26 after further consideration and investigation, Applicant has discovered that the scope of original independent claim 1 was overly narrow in view of the state of the art at the time the application was filed. Applicant submits this claim to capture subject matter that lies within the scope of the disclosure that was not originally captured in the claims of the patent as issued. Specifically, Applicant has amended the

language to eliminate excess language and non-functional elements from the claim to more clearly identify the invention.

New Claim 27 after further consideration and investigation, Applicant has discovered that the scope of original independent claim 1 was overly narrow in view of the state of the art at the time the application was filed. Applicant submits this claim to capture subject matter that lies within the scope of the disclosure that was not originally captured in the claims of the patent as issued. Specifically, Applicant has amended the language to eliminate excess language and non-functional elements from the claim to more clearly identify the invention.